



École de la fonction
publique du Canada

Canada School
of Public Service

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Introduction

PURPOSE

The purpose of *Interaction Canada: Phase 3 Level C* is to provide you with many opportunities to practise the functions, grammar and strategies you learned in the first two phases of the program.

DESCRIPTION

This book is divided into five sections, one for each Second Language Exam (SLE) objective:

- Explaining/Describing
- Supporting Opinions / Defending Points of View
- Counselling/Advising
- Handling Hypothetical Questions
- Handling Complex Work-Related Situations

In addition, an appendix lists exponents for each of the functions mentioned in the sections.

Each activity section consists of an introductory page and 20 independent activities. Each activity contains four boxes.

The first box presents a situation, drawn from work or personal life, which will allow you to practise one of the SLE objectives. The next two boxes present functions and grammar to use in each activity. The functions are also found in the appendix. The fourth box presents vocabulary.

In separate files you will find Templates, a Feedback sheet and a Self-Performance Checklist that should be adapted to your needs, then printed or copied and used with each of the activities. The templates allow you and your teacher to set target language for each practice of a situation. Feedback sheets are used to monitor your progress and help you to focus on areas to improve. The checklist is provided to help you assess how well you believe you have mastered the functions, grammar and vocabulary focussed on in each activity.

Interaction Canada: Phase 3 Level C is designed for maximum flexibility. You can use it in many different ways. Each SLE objective section and each activity is independent; you can work on any one without having completed work on any of the others. This means that you can choose your own route through the materials; for example, you might want to focus only on those sections dealing with the SLE objectives which are difficult for you; within those sections you could work on any or all of the situations in the order they are presented or in any order you choose.

In addition, you are encouraged to adapt any situation to bring it closer to your own experience.

The activities are designed for use with a *partner*. In each activity, you could be either the major or the minor speaker. Specific instructions for the major speaker appear in each situation; general instructions for the minor speaker appear only in the introductory part to each section (see note later for more detail).



To get the most out of each activity, you may wish to tape the interaction and later review the tape to pin point where you need improvement.

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

The activities are designed to give you practice speaking with the proficiency and fluency consistent with the performance standards for Level C. In specific terms, this level of performance requires you to:

- use precise vocabulary to convey exact meaning;
- link sequences of events in time;
- link facts in logical sequence;
- link sentences effectively to convey complex ideas;
- discuss a broad variety of topics;
- expand on topics with ease.

At the same time, you are expected to:

- hesitate rarely, except for ideas;
- have natural delivery;
- understand readily and accurately what is said to you;
- be easily understood.

Since all the activities could be performed at a B level of proficiency, it is up to you to make the extra effort required to bring your performance up to a C level. Use the above information to guide your planning, performance and subsequent self-evaluation of each activity you tackle.

A reminder of Level C performance standards appears on the introductory page of each section.

HOW TO PROCEED

Find a partner. With your partner choose a situation and decide who will be the major and minor speakers. Partners can be a native speaker or your teacher during one-on-one oral interaction practice sessions.

MAJOR SPEAKER:

The approach you choose at this point depends on your learning style.

1. To begin you may prefer to prepare each step carefully, following these steps:

- think about the situation;
- discuss the possibilities with your partner;
- study the functions listed:
 - decide which functions you will focus on and set them as targets on your template;
 - check the appendix for exponents and add them to your template;
- study the grammar listed:
 - decide which structures you will need and note them on your template;
 - review these structures, if necessary;

- study the vocabulary listed:
 - decide which words you will use and set targets on your template;
 - think of any other words you might need or want to use and add them to the template;
- if you decide to record, turn on your tape recorder;
- do the activity with your partner.

When you are finished:

- if you recorded the activity, listen to your recording;
- analyze your performance, using the evaluation checklist to determine your strengths and weaknesses;
- (if you have done the activity as a one-on-one with your teacher, he or she should give you feedback using the Feedback sheets);
- try to improve any weaknesses:
 - check the appendix for additional exponents for the functions you need;
 - review any necessary grammar;
 - review any necessary vocabulary.

You can redo each activity as many times as you feel you need to. Modify the situation to make it more interesting. Change your language targets on your template. Add functions and vocabulary to help you improve your performance and keep the activity interesting and challenging.

Now REPEAT the activity and see if you can do better this time.

2. You may also want to deep-end an activity from time to time (i.e. attempt the activity without preparing first), follow these steps:
 - think about the situation;
 - glance at the functions, grammar and vocabulary;
 - if you decide to record the activity, turn on your tape recorder;
 - do the activity with your partner.

Again, repeat the activity until you feel you are comfortable and happy with the result.

Minor speaker:

You will take the part of the secondary person in the situation. This person may be the boss, a colleague, a friend, an interviewer or a workshop participant.

Your job is to help your partner speak English at the Level C standard.

The introductory page for each SLE section provides suggestions for eliciting more language from your partner.

Study this page while your partner prepares. If you need to review exponents for the functions listed on this page, turn to the appendix pages for those functions.

OPINIONS/EXPLANATIONS

1. The federal government is considering a "whistleblower" policy which will give public servants a way to disclose wrongdoing, waste or mismanagement without risking their jobs or exposing themselves to their manager's disapproval. Many conflicting views have been expressed:

Some feel such a policy is unnecessary because, if the public interest is at stake, public servants already have the freedom of expression to voice their concerns even though they are supposed to be loyal to their employer.

Some agree that public servants need this policy as a "safe haven" where they can expose problems but they disagree about who should take on this role – the PSC, the auditor general, an ombudsman? Some, who think protection for whistleblowers is necessary, say a policy is not enough; they think a law is necessary to define the line between loyalty to the employer and the public interest and thus to protect the whistleblowers.

What examples of whistleblowing are you aware of? Were there negative repercussions for the whistleblower? As things are now, would you report on mismanagement? How serious would a problem have to be before you considered it necessary to "blow the whistle"? What do you think of the need for a policy or a law to encourage whistleblowing and to protect the whistleblower?

2. There is a proposal for a public service overhaul: the proposal introduces a new model of collective bargaining which would be collaborative and team-building instead of adversarial. In cases of impasse, disputes would go to an independent commission for a binding decision; the focus of the resolution would be the interests of the public, not the interests of the disputing parties.

Some changes proposed would give Departments more leeway to match policies to the needs of their employees, for example, hours of work and pay. A Compensation Research Bureau would track salaries in private industry to compare public servants' pay with the rest of the market.

What do you think?

(Consider: What changes to the public service would you like to see? What are your views of the proposal outlined above? What would or wouldn't work?)

3. How has the internet affected the workplace? Some people say the internet has negatively affected the workplace because people waste too much time playing games, surfing, or chatting. Some are concerned about the misuse of the internet through advertisements which use the workplace address. Others praise the speed and efficiency of both communication and information retrieval provided by the internet. What is your view? Explain why you feel the way you do.
4. You have been asked to participate in a focus group to discuss the image of public servants. Some say they are overpaid, work too slowly, provide poor service to the public, communicate poorly,.... What do you think? What can be done to improve the image and to encourage competent, enthusiastic, young people to consider working for the public service?
5. You are a participant in a seminar gathering information on reactions to cell phones: are they a blessing, a menace, a nuisance, a safety hazard, a health hazard? Are they essential for constant, immediate communication in personal and work life? What do you think? Explain your views.

6. What are the components for successful management? Why? Consider some of the following:
- decision making: manager makes all the decisions alone, or involves others;
 - supervising all tasks, or delegating;
 - telling people exactly what to do, or letting them figure out requirements on their own;
 - fostering competition or co-operation;
 - using the same management techniques consistently in all situations;
 - providing recognition and positive reinforcement: is it necessary?,...what kind?,...is there ever too much?,...;
 - performance appraisal: on-going or once a year.
7. Based on your own experience while on language training and on what you know about the experience of others, what changes should be made and what should remain the same? (Consider courses, related activities, materials, equipment, allotment of time,...)
8. Government departments have frequently used surveys to poll employees on various issues, such as job satisfaction. What is your opinion of the usefulness of such surveys? Explain your views.
9. What are the characteristics of the best manager or boss you ever had? (Consider the importance of valuing others' opinions, being a good listener, respecting employees, giving praise,....)
10. It is now possible for federal service employees to take a year of parental leave. What do you think of the policy? (Consider the problems for the workplace, advantages for the family, problems when the parent returns to the workplace,...)